# Press release

PRINTABLE VERSION

## Met Office support in Afghanistan

13 February 2002

A special unit from the Met Office flew out to Afghanistan this week to support the International Stabilisation Assistance Force, led by troops from the UK. The Mobile Met. Unit (MMU) is setting up base at Kabul International Airport and will be on hand to provide weather information to help both the war on terrorism and the humanitarian aid effort.

A small unit has been based at Bagram airport since November, providing support to the first UK military units. But this week a full unit of four people, flew out to the country. The unit , whose headquarters are based at RAF Benson, near Oxford, will provide all the weather services necessary to operate the airport to normal international standards, and will also offer environmental advice to military and humanitarian aid planners, to ensure safe and effective operations.

The MMU consists of Met Office forecasters, support staff and technicians, whose aim is to provide met support to both UK military and NATO operations across the globe as required. The MMU is a sponsored Reserve Unit, all its staff are members of the RAF Reserve and as such partake fully in RAF duties when on operations or exercises.

Jim Sharp, director of MMU, said: "By having people on the ground we are able to interact directly with the people taking operational decisions. The service the Met Office provides from Britain gives a very good idea of what is happening in the country as a whole but the people on the ground are in a much better position, they have a much better idea of local factors."

Notes

A sponsored Reserve Unit is one in which the MoD agrees with an external organisation to supply a complete unit, including equipment and staff fully trained for both military and their specialist tasks. The MMU was the first such unit when it converted in October 2000.

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